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wishing either to traverse the country or to come there as settlers, every assistance was afforded to them, even when the Company could ill afford it, both in money and provisions. In proof of this he need only refer to the year 1862, when a large body of Canadian emigrants, deluded by a Company formed in England with the ostensible object of providing means of transport across the country, were brought as far as Fort Garry and left there without any means of proceeding further. He was the means of rendering the poor emigrants assistance in the way of provisions and information of every kind, and had forwarded them across the country. He could confidently assert that there was no monopoly of trade in the Hudson Bay territories. Trade is free and open to every man, and the country is equally open to settlement; indeed, the country is more free than in any part of the United States, because a man can settle in any place he pleases, and is not called upon to pay for his land until it has been surveyed. With regard to the "benches" which had been observed in the upper part of the Frazer River valley, he could say that they were to be found extending over a vast tract of country. The upper waters of the Columbia River forced their way through a series of gorges, similar to those of the Frazer, in passing through the Cascade Range; and the whole of the country to the eastward and northward was more or less a series of these most extraordinary "benches." They rose tier upon tier, and extended across the country in a straight line, broken here and there by valleys, forests, and other obstructions. They were so clearly marked that they left no doubt on the minds of the Indians that the whole country had at one time been submerged, and that the water had been drained off at successive periods. In travelling to the southward, the Indians pointed out in the Blue Mountains a spot where they said there was the trunk of a tree, denuded of its branches, lying on the ground at a higher level than the limit of the growth of trees. They stated that no tree of the kind grew in that part of the world, and that it had been conveyed there in former ages by water.

Lord MILTON, in explaining the nature of the grass found in British Columbia, the "bunch" grass, said that wherever the mountains and valleys are free from woods, the country is generally covered with this kind of grass, except in some of the very lowest levels close to the edges of the rivers. The bunch grass is as good as corn for the sustenance of sheep and cattle during the summer and autumn; but it had this disadvantage, that it only grew on a light sandy soil, and it grew better on the "benches" than anywhere else. Cattle pulled it up by the roots, and sheep eat it so close that when winter comes the frost kills it. Unlike other grass, it takes three or four years for each plant to come to perfection: it does not grow thickly, so that a large tract of it is very soon destroyed. With regard to the road, he hoped there would soon be one carried by the line of Tête-Jaune's Cache to Cariboo. The country between Jasper House and Canada offered every facility for a road, and even for a railroad. There was plenty of coal. He had seen coal 22 feet thick, without shale either above or below. The Pembina River ran between two solid walls of coal, with sandstone above and below, and it could be worked by a gallery without any of the ordinary difficulties we are obliged to contend with in this country. It is a soft coal, burns with a dull heavy flame and a great deal of smoke, and is very bituminous. The engineering difficulties in the way of making a road would be comparatively small, and, with a well-organised party and plenty of provisions, there would be no difficulty in making a sound and permanent road all the way.

The next Paper was—

2. *On the new country of North Australia discovered by Mr. John Macdougall Stuart.* By MR. STUART.

THIS was a brief account of the fertile region between the centre

of Australia and the mouth of the Adelaide River, which had been explored by the author in his journeys across the continent. The climate was healthy, and the land well adapted for European settlers, if Malays and Chinese could be introduced as a labouring class, in which there was no difficulty. After passing the centre of Australia, going north, the country improved; abundance of trees were found, and fresh grass always occurred where the herbage had been burned by natives. On reaching Sturt's Plains, feed for stock abounded; and this abundance continued, with few exceptions, to the coast. Signs of tropical vegetation showed themselves on approaching Roper River; three species of palms were observed, and the grass was 7 feet in height. With regard to the salubrity of the climate, Mr. Stuart observed that, notwithstanding privations and exposure, the men under his command enjoyed, during the three journeys, with one or two exceptions, excellent health; he himself being the only sufferer—which was owing to overwork and anxiety. The Adelaide River had 40 feet of water at a distance of 80 miles from its mouth, and its entrance formed a secure harbour. In concluding, Mr. Stuart said he should avail himself of his privilege as discoverer, by giving a name to this region hitherto known only as North Australia. He proposed calling it "Alexandra Land," after Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales.

The PRESIDENT recalled the attention of the Society to the great achievements of Mr. Macdougall Stuart, who was now present among them, for the first time at an evening meeting, and who was the only man that had traversed Australia from south to north, a feat for which he had received the highest honour in the power of the Society to confer. He then remarked that the Paper pointed especially to the future advantages of the mouth of the Adelaide River as a British settlement. Upon that point there had been differences of opinion; but for his part he had always advocated the establishment of a British settlement upon the northern coast of Australia. He had expressed this wish in his various Addresses to the Society. Independently of any difficulties which might arise respecting the climate—and we had proofs that it was a very fertile region—he did think that as our country already possessed the three other sides of this vast continent, we should not be without some great port upon the great line of seaboard upon the north, and not allow any other nation to establish a possession there.

Mr. CRAWFURD differed from Mr. Stuart, his friend the President, and everybody else who thought we ought to establish a settlement on the northern shore of Australia. We had already tried two settlements close to the spot which it was now proposed to colonise. The settlement of Port Essington was a total failure. Sir Harry Keppel, who brought the settlers away, told him a few days ago that he never saw people so charmed and delighted at leaving a place as they were on being removed from that spot. There was also a settlement formed upon Melville Island, which, after a short experience, had been abandoned.

Sir CHARLES NICHOLSON said a party of marines was sent there, that was all; there was no attempt at colonisation.

Mr. CRAWFURD had not the least doubt that the new settlement would prove a less egregious failure than its two predecessors. It was situated on a river

having a depth of three or four fathoms for some miles inland. But what were the settlers to do when they were there? The settlement would be fifteen or sixteen hundred miles from the other civilised places in Australia. As for the Malays, they were bad workers; and the Chinese, as long as they could find employment nearer home or in the mines of California and Victoria, would never come near the place; and without these people he defied any European to carry on cultivation in such a climate. Then, who were to be the consumers of their produce? and as for producing wool within 15 degrees of the equator, such a thing had never been heard of. Sheep might live and fatten there, but they would produce no wool.

Sir CHARLES NICHOLSON said that with respect to the question of a settlement at the Adelaide River, it was in vain to attempt to convert Mr. Crawford by any statement of facts. He could only say that the progress of settlement was now going on with extreme rapidity along the whole of the Northern Australian coast, and that the exportation of wool from all the different ports that have been established is increasing in the most marvellous ratio year after year. At Keppel Bay, within 23 degrees of the equator, when he was there, three years ago, the export of wool was under 1000 bales. This year the export is 9000 bales, all derived from sheep growing within the tropics; and the estimated export for the next year from that one port alone is 14,000 bales. At Fort Bowen, Cleveland Bay, which is in lat. 17°, it is found that the flocks and herds increase, though with some slight diminution in the weight of the fleece; but on the whole the animals appear to thrive there as well as in other parts of the country. Lately a colonising party has taken possession of Rockingham Bay, which is in lat. 16°, with every prospect of success. As to the settlements at Port Essington and Melville Island, they were not settlements at all. A party of marines was sent there for a few years; the Government would not sell the land, and made no attempt to invite settlers. It is very remarkable that Port Essington is one of the most healthy places along the coast; for several years there was not a single death, and scarcely a serious case of illness. Therefore, so far as that circumstance went, notwithstanding the great heat which characterised the climate, the presumption was that the country will be found to be healthy.

Mr. ARTHUR believed the position of Melville Island and Adelaide River, and the ease with which vessels of all descriptions can enter by Van Diemen Gulf into the Adelaide River, and find refuge there from every wind, point out that locality as the best place for the establishment of a colony, and the formation of a harbour of refuge. He believed a colony there would draw capital from this country and labourers from over-populated districts of China. The soil is capable of yielding many tropical productions, such as sugar, cotton, and rice. The Chinese had already proved their ability to work in British colonies, and only required protection and security to enjoy the fruits of their industry in order to become willing labourers. The Malays were known to be well-disposed towards the English, and these islands on the north of Australia would become a source of labour of great extent. With regard to sheep, even admitting that Mr. Crawford is right in his belief that they would produce hair and not wool (which is not proved), why should not the hair be as valuable for manufactures as wool? He saw no reason why the intended colony should not be a great success.

The meeting then separated.